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JAPAN: Stalemate in Succession Negotiations

Today is the deadline for a negotiated settlement of the leadership crisis in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, and opposing sides are still deadlocked. If a compromise is not reached, the party will begin preparing for a primary next month. Party members in the Diet would then elect a president from the top three vote-getters. The forces led by former Prime Minister Fukuda remain opposed to faction leader Nakasone, the candidate of the dominant coalition headed by Suzuki and former Prime Minister Tanaka.

1/5 Comment: Neither side seems willing to compromise, but party leaders recognize the dangers of a well-publicized internal struggle and will continue their talks until the last minute in an effort to break the deadlock. If a primary is necessary, no progress is likely to be made on important domestic economic problems or on trade and defense problems with the US until after the voting.

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